



# Senator Sheila Kuehl

**23<sup>rd</sup> District  
Newsletter**  
June 2005

## Mancini Named 23<sup>rd</sup> District Teacher of the Year

By Hilda Garcia

Senator Sheila Kuehl named Carmen Mancini as the 23<sup>rd</sup> State Senate District's Teacher of the Year for 2005. Ms. Mancini serves as Chair of the Language Immersion Program at John Adams Middle School in Santa Monica. Ms. Mancini, along with 39 other teachers across the state, was honored at the California State Senate's first annual 'Teacher of the Year' celebration on May 23 for significant contributions to education.

Ms. Mancini also serves as Chair of Adams' Diversity Committee and was selected by students as the Advisor to the Adelante Club, which offers mentorship to disadvantaged students who wish to prepare for a university education. Ms. Mancini also works, through the Academic Study Scholars' Program, to assist students who have fallen behind academically. She was recognized for her dedication to education and to her students by the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified Council PTA with an Outstanding Service Award earlier this year.



*Senator Sheila Kuehl, Carmen Mancini, and Senate President ProTem Don Perata on the Senate Floor. Photo by Lorie Shelley.*

She is the proud mother of three children who attend Santa-Monica Malibu Unified School District schools.

*Hilda Garcia is Field Representative in Senator Kuehl's District Office.*

### Senator Sheila J. Kuehl 23<sup>rd</sup> Senate District

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# Women Against Gun Violence Honors Kuehl

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By Tam Ma

Senator Sheila Kuehl was honored by Women Against Gun Violence (WAGV) with the 10th annual Courageous Leadership Award on May 22.

"WAGV is pleased to honor Senator Kuehl for her staunch advocacy of legislation that helps keep all Californians safe and healthy, and especially for her ardent support of sensible firearms legislation. Senator Kuehl has been a longtime friend to WAGV and we are honored to call her our partner in our important efforts to prevent the gun violence that devastates communities

across the state," said Karen Michail Shah, Executive Director of WAGV.



WAGV founder Ann Reiss Lane and Senator Sheila Kuehl. Photo by AnnaMaria DiSanto.

Pete Carroll, USC's head football coach, also received the WAGV's Courageous Leadership Award. Carroll started a nonprofit organization entitled "A Better LA" in an effort to change the culture of violence in the area surrounding USC. A Better LA is a nonprofit group consisting of a consortium of agencies and organizations working to reduce gang violence by empowering change in individuals and communities.

Women Against Gun Violence is an ever-expanding coalition of friends, supporters and over 100 organiza-

tions. WAGV has worked for over a decade to address issues of gun violence by presenting data that communicates the extent of the problem as well as the stories of those people who lost their lives to gun violence,

and the stories of their survivors. The organization grew out of a 1993 national seminar that articulated guns and gun violence as a women's issue, held in Los Angeles and co-coordinated by then-Los Angeles Police Commissioner Ann Reiss Lane. With the involvement of women and their families, the coalition hoped to profoundly change the climate of the gun violence debate by working with elected officials, survivors, and communities.

One of WAGV's major programs is the Victims Re-

membrance Project, which provides elected officials and media representatives with specific names and ages of gunshot victims to remind them of this epidemic's human face. WAGV also works with the families and loved ones of those killed by guns, empowering them to speak out and prevent such tragedies from happening to other families. WAGV's online victims memorial (<http://www.wagv.org/memorial.htm>) provides a place for all to honor those killed by firearms.

*Tam Ma is a Policy Consultant in Senator Kuehl's Capitol Office.*

## Jim Wrigley Named "Citizen of the Year"

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By Laura Plotkin

On Friday, May 6th, the Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation named Jim Wrigley as its Citizen of the Year for 2005. Jim's work to help secure the recent landmark state acquisition of the SOKA property in the Santa Monica Mountains, by traveling to Sacramento to testify at hearings, was the contribution that earned him this year's recognition.

Over 100 people attending the annual banquet at the Malibou Lake Mountain Club lauded his efforts and

accomplishments. Steve Hess, the Federation's president said, "Jim Wrigley is an outstanding member of the Federation and the community, and the Federation is proud to name him our Citizen of the Year!"

State Parks Director Ruth Coleman was the keynote speaker for the event and was also praised by both Assemblymember Fran Pavley and Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky for her leadership in helping to close the SOKA transaction.

*Laura Plotkin is Senator Kuehl's District Director.*

# SB 660: Letting Parents Know When Police Question Children

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By Tam Ma

Most people are amazed to learn that children can be questioned and interrogated by police at school without the knowledge of their parents and without any understanding of their rights during an investigation. Most parents believe that they have a statutory or constitutional right to be present with their child during police questioning at school, but they do not. Current law requires school administrators to notify parents when a student is taken off campus into law enforcement custody. Otherwise, school administrators have no duty to contact parents.

Authored by Senator Kuehl, SB 660 provides a means for parents, schools and law enforcement to work together by furnishing parents the opportunity to be present during the questioning of their child at school. The bill sets forth procedures that school administrators must follow prior to making schoolchildren available for questioning by a peace officer. Specifically, this bill creates two different levels of protection for minors.

Under SB 660, the principal or his or her designee would be required to obtain permission from an elementary school child's parent or guardian before police could interrogate the child. If the parent expresses a desire to be present during the interrogation, the questioning would not begin until the parent is present.

For high school students, the principal or their designee would be required to inform the student that he or she has the right to request that a parent or trusted member of the school staff be present during the questioning.

SB 660 also allows for circumstances that may call for the immediate interview of a child without the parental notification requirement:

- The peace officer reasonably believes that, due to exigent circumstances, a delay in questioning will materially interfere with the investigation and pose a substantial risk that a suspect may not be apprehended or prosecuted in a timely manner.
- The peace officer reasonably believes there is a substantial risk of immediate personal injury or substantial property damage.
- The minor pupil being questioned is suspected of being a victim of child abuse.
- The pupil is being questioned about criminal activity of the parent or person who otherwise would be present during the questioning.
- The pupil is on probation or parole and is being questioned by a probation or parole officer.

The issue of parental involvement in police questioning of students has been debated in the Legislature for nearly 15 years. Several pieces of legislation, including AB 2501 (Mazzoni, 1998) and AB 1012 (Steinberg, 2003) passed the Legislature with strong bipartisan support but ended up being vetoed by the Governor because of opposition from law enforcement groups. This issue will remain on the legislature's agenda until the matter is appropriately addressed.

Opponents to SB 660 claim that the bill will lead to delays in investigations and jeopardize school safety, despite the fact that the bill provides five specified exceptions in the interest of public safety. Outside of emergency situations and other circumstances outlined in the bill, there is no reason why law enforcement can't wait for parents to be notified before interrogating young children.

Locally, the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District has had a policy requiring parents to be notified before police interrogations begin since 2002. The San Francisco Unified School District has also had a similar policy for the past six years. While individual school districts can craft their own policies regarding police interrogation of students, the rights of parents and children should not depend upon such a piecemeal approach.

SB 660 is sponsored by the California PTA and has strong support from numerous organizations, including the Girl Scouts of California, Children's Advocacy Institute, the California Teachers Association, the California Federation of Teachers, American Civil Liberties Union, California Attorneys for Criminal Justice, and the California Public Defenders Association.

SB 660 has strong bipartisan support and passed out of the Senate on a 25-10 vote on May 31. It now moves to the Assembly for consideration. For more information about SB 660, contact Tam Ma at (916)651-4023.

*Tam Ma is a Policy Consultant in Senator Kuehl's Capitol Office.*

# El Camino Wins National Academic Decathlon

By Anne Neville

Congratulations to El Camino Real High School for winning the National Academic Decathlon Championship! After winning the LAUSD and then the State title, the nine-member team from Woodland Hills went on to score an amazing 49,009 out of 60,000 possible points. The school also won the National title last year, making them the first in 20 years to repeat as National Academic Decathlon Champions.



*Senator Kuehl with El Camino High Academic Decathlon team. Photo by Lorie Shelley.*

In honor of this achievement, the California State Senate honored the team on Monday May 23, on the floor of the state Senate. Senator Sheila Kuehl presented a resolution to the team, and the Senators applauded all of the members and their coaches on this exciting accomplishment.

The Academic Decathlon is a national team competition in which students from different academic levels match their intellects with students from other schools.

Each of the El Camino students showed tremendous dedication, spending about 40 hours each week preparing for the regional, state, and national events.

The team's coaches, Christian Cerone and Lissa Gregorio, helped each of the team members gain fluency in the Decathlon's ten events: Art, Economics, Essay, Interview, Language and Literature, Mathematics, Music, Science, Social Science, and Speech.

To learn more about Academic Decathlon, visit: <http://academicdecathlon.org/startteam.html>

*Anne Neville is the Senate Fellow in Senator Kuehl's Capitol office.*

## Law Student Turns School Project Into Legislation

By Kate Hege

The University of California Hastings College of the Law has a new program that gives law students the opportunity to have a clinical educational experience in the California legislature. The idea behind clinical education is that students get hands-on experience with the law, rather than studying it only in the classroom. The Legislative Clinic was created to familiarize students with legislation and the legislative process, aspects of the law that are often ignored in a traditional legal education.

I enrolled in Hastings's Legislative Clinic and spent my spring semester interning in Senator Kuehl's office. I worked directly under Bill Craven, Chief consultant for the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee, which Senator Kuehl chairs. Both Senator Kuehl and Bill Craven were conscientious mentors, committed to providing me with an enriching internship experience. They allowed me to transform a policy report that I had written into an actual bill while mentoring me through the processes of statutory construction, coalition

building, and "working a bill." What eventually became SB 646, a bill dealing with water pollution and permit regulations, has passed out of the Senate and is currently awaiting its first policy committee hearing in the Assembly. If this bill passes out of the legislature and is signed by the Governor, it will make great strides in improving California's water quality.

My internship with Senator Kuehl's office was an incredible experience that I will take with me throughout my career as a lawyer. After I finish my third year of law school, graduate, and pass the bar I hope to work for an environmental organization that utilizes the courts, the administrative agencies, and the legislature to create change. I am excited to be able to offer such an organization the skills I have acquired while interning with Senator Kuehl and Bill Craven. I am grateful that they are so committed to building up tomorrow's leaders in the law that they took me on to mentor me.

*Kate Hege is in her 3rd year of law school and plans to practice environmental law.*

# Ventura County Naval Base Saved From Closure

## Potential for local job losses still a concern

By Hilda Garcia

Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld announced May 13 the department's recommendations to close or realign military facilities in the United States. These recommendations for base restructuring and closure were made after two years of study. Rumsfeld expects to save nearly \$50 billion over the next two decades if the recommendations are approved.

The Naval Base Ventura County (NBVC) survived the list of the Base Realignment Process Commission (BRAC) base closures. NBVC is a major aviation shore command and a major Naval Construction Force mobilization base providing airfield, seaport, and base support services to fleet operating forces and shore activities.

A national defense resource, NBVC offers a unique combination of mission capabilities to the Navy and the Department of Defense (DOD). NBVC and its tenants employ over 6,000 civilians, 9,000 military personnel and 1,300 contractor personnel. In addition, NBVC hosts over 60 tenant commands.

According to the Ventura County Economic Development Association, NBVC is currently the largest employer in Ventura County, with roughly 17,000 direct and indirect jobs, bringing over \$1.2 billion in economic impact to the region.

While NBVC survived the closure list, some missions at Port Hueneme and Point Mugu could be relocated. Secretary Rumsfeld recommended moving some of the research, development, acquisition, test and evaluation missions away from the base. The restructuring will result in the loss of military and civilian jobs in Ventura County. The precise number of job loss will

not be known until the DOD makes more data available regarding its base realignment and closure recommendations. However, although some things remain unsettled, it appears that the DOD is firmly supportive of Point Mugu and Port Hueneme.

Congress established the 2005 BRAC Commission to ensure the integrity of the base closure and realignment process. The Commission was directed by law to provide an objective, non-partisan, and independent review and analysis of the list of military installation recommendations issued by the Department of Defense (DOD). The Commission is now tasked to follow a fair, open, and equitable process, as set forth by statute. The Commission's mission is to assess whether the DOD recommendations substantially deviated from the Congressional criteria used to evaluate each military base. While giving priority to the criteria of military value, the Commission will also take into account the human impact of the base closures and will consider the possible economic, environmental, and other effects on the surrounding communities.

The independent BRAC Commission will hold public hearings before finalizing the list and sending it to the President and then Congress later this year. A regional hearing will be held in Los Angeles on July 17 where community members and stakeholders can give input on the DOD recommendations.

The Ventura County Economic Development Association is spearheading the local BRAC Task Force, which has been meeting regularly since 2003 in order to develop a defensive strategy plan. For more information, contact the BRAC Task Force at (805) 320-1328 or visit [www.vceda.org/bases](http://www.vceda.org/bases)

*Hilda Garcia is Field Deputy in Senator Kuehl's District Office.*

## 23<sup>rd</sup> Senate District

*The 23<sup>rd</sup> Senate District includes the cities of Agoura Hills, Beverly Hills, Calabasas, Hidden Hills, Malibu, Oxnard, Santa Monica, West Hollywood and Westlake Village and the communities of Bel Air, Brentwood, Canoga Park, Encino, Hollywood, Mt. Olympus, Port Hueneme, Pacific Palisades, Sherman Oaks, Studio City, Tarzana, Topanga, West Los Angeles, West Hills, Westwood and Woodland Hills.*





# Senate Passes Kuehl's Healthcare Reform Bill

By Sara Rogers

It's incredible to read that there are a few health pundits out there trying to sell a 7.5% increase in health care costs last year as good news. They point out that 2004's increase is slightly lower than last year's increase, so let's keep doing what we've been doing. Yet, with wages up a mere 1.7%, and our gross state product growth only around 5%, health spending and its lack of affordability remains the single greatest problem facing California's economy. And explain this -- while health care costs increased 7.5%, insurance premiums have continued to rise in double digits for the 5<sup>th</sup> year in a row. Where's the money going, you might ask?

The truly good news is that real reform is gaining momentum -- and fast. With two swift jumps, the California Health Insurance Reliability Act (CHIRA), SB 840 (Kuehl), passed the Senate Appropriations Committee (no small feat) and then sailed through the Senate floor on a vote of 24-14. This was the first time that the California Senate voted on the substantive provisions of the bill; SB 840's passage sets the stage for a permanent shift in the health care debate going on in the state.

More good news: the National Coalition on Health Care, the largest non-partisan health care coalition in the nation, recently announced that system-wide universal health care would save much more than it would cost.

We've known this for years -- that universal health care is affordable and attainable. Their findings confirm, once again, that the problem is not that we spend too much, the problem is that we waste so much of what we do spend.

That waste is why we have a system where patients receive less than half of the care that their physician recommends. That is health care rationing.

More insane is a system that rations care by leaving 20% of the population uninsured. Our system rations care by cutting off access to our young adults and to

our working poor. By 2013, ¼ of our population will be directly affected by this rationing.

And we ration care by forcing everyone, insured and uninsured, to choose between life-saving medical care and financial ruin. Half of all personal bankruptcies in the country are related to medical costs, and ¾ of those are in families that were insured when they became ill or injured.

Moreover, for all of that spending, we are not getting the best quality health care in the world. In fact, our health care outcomes rank at the bottom of industrialized nations (37<sup>th</sup> in the world) according to the World Health Organization. The harm that our fragmented health care system inflicts on the health of every single person in this state is staggering.

SB 840 (Kuehl) provides fiscally sound, affordable health insurance coverage to all Californians, provides every Californian the right to choose his or her own physician and controls health cost inflation.

The model of SB 840 works by:

- ♦ Creating administrative efficiencies. By consolidating the functions of countless insurance companies and plans into one health insurance finance system California could save an estimated \$19 billion in the first year.
- ♦ Emphasizing preventative and primary care. A single insurance system doesn't worry that patients will leave its network at the end of the year, so it has an incentive to invest in patient-centered preventative care. That could save the system an estimated \$3.4 billion.
- ♦ Using our purchasing power to negotiate discounts for prescription drugs and durable medical equipment, just like every other industrialized nation has done. That shift could save California over \$5 billion, in the first year alone.
- ♦ SB 840 re-directs money that would have been wasted into direct health services, durable medical equipment and provider reimbursements; this is more than enough to afford health care that every single Californian, regardless of their medi-

*Healthcare Reform continued on page 7.*

cal needs, could rely on.

Additionally, SB 840:

- ◆ Allows you to choose your own physician.
- ◆ Makes you and your doctor responsible for making health care decisions. SB 840 covers all care that is medically appropriate, as determined by your physician, whom you choose.
- ◆ Bases coverage on California residency. You do not lose coverage if you lose or change jobs and the concept of 'pre-existing conditions' are a thing of the past.
- ◆ Establishes democratic control of our health care system. Instead of a multitude of faceless insurance executives, our system would be governed by a statewide elected commissioner of health.

- ◆ Covered benefits under the bill include hospital, medical, surgical, and mental health; dental and vision care; prescription drugs and medical equipment, such as hearing aids; emergency care including ambulance; diagnostic testing; and hospice care and much more.

SB 840 (CHIRA) offers a strong vision for a modernized health care system that will provide high quality, affordable and reliable health care for all residents. I urge you to support the California Health Insurance Reliability Act of 2005.

For more information contact Sara Rogers at (916) 651-4023 or Judy Spelman at (916) 322-1680.

*Sara Rogers is Chief Legislative Aide on healthcare issues in Senator Kuehl's Capitol Office.*

## Senate Fellows Get Intensive Public Policy Training

Each spring, 18 people with diverse life experiences and backgrounds are selected to become California Senate Fellows. The Fellowship is a joint program administered by the California State Senate and California State University – Sacramento (CSUS). In addition to the Senate Fellowship, CSUC also jointly administers the Assembly and Executive Fellowship programs. Together, these three fellowship programs comprise the Capitol Fellows Program.

The program receives 500-600 Senate Fellow applications each year. A selection panel, comprised of Senate staff and representatives from CSUS, reviews each application, ultimately selecting 70 people for interviews. Of this group of interviewees, 18 are then selected to serve in the Fellowship.

Senate Fellows serve as full-time Senate staff for 11 months beginning in October of each year. During the first five weeks of the program, Fellows undergo an intensive orientation to familiarize them with the major policy issues impacting California, as well as the procedures the Senate utilizes to pass legislation. Following the orientation, Fellows interview in different Senate offices. Senator Kuehl's office is always a popular choice for Fellows, and more than one fellow often places this office as his or her first choice. In fact, in every year but one, a Fellow has been placed in Senator Kuehl's office.

This year's fellow, Anne Neville, moved here from San Diego, where she had lived since 2000. As an AmeriCorps\*VISTA volunteer, Anne opened, and then directed, a community center providing technology



training and access to low-income communities. In 2002, she joined a national non-profit, managing a grant program designed to increase the capacity of community-based organizations. Anne had been increasingly involved in telecommunications policies affecting low-income communities, but she had little experience with the legislative process. Attempting to better understand California's political and policy landscape, Anne applied to the California Senate Fellowship. She currently staffs the Senator on three bills, several policy issues, and budget items related to energy and telecommunications. In addition, she responds to various constituent issues and analyzes several bills for the Natural Resources and Water Committee.

The California Senate Fellowship requires no preferred major, only a four year degree and an interest in public policy and politics. More information about the Senate Fellows program can be found here: <http://www.csus.edu/calst/senate/>. Fellows receive a monthly stipend of \$1972 plus full health, vision and dental benefits. They also earn 12 units of graduate credit from the CSUS Government Department.

# LGBT Caucus Unveils 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Pride Exhibit

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By Eric Astacaan

In observance of June 2005 as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Pride Month, the California Legislative LGBT Caucus is proudly hosting the 4th Annual Pride Exhibit in the second floor rotunda of the State Capitol.

The exhibit is co-sponsored by California State Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez and Senate President pro Tempore Don Perata. For the fourth year in a row, the Lavender Library, Archives and Cultural Exchange (LLACE) designed the exhibit which will be on display for the whole month of June. LLACE is being assisted by the California Department of Parks & Recreation's State Capitol Museum.

"The LGBT Caucus commends LLACE for presenting this historic exhibit in our State Capitol," said Senator Sheila Kuehl, Chair of the LGBT Caucus. "This exhibit provides thousands of people who visit the State Capitol with a great opportunity to better understand the lives of LGBT people everywhere. It highlights both the joys and the sorrows, and illustrates our collective journey toward dignity, understanding, and mutual respect for

all people, while recognizing that we still have a long way to go in overcoming the prejudice and discrimination faced by LGBT people face everyday."

The exhibit is believed to be the first of its kind in any state capitol in the nation. It shows a timeline of events that affected the LGBT communities around the country. The exhibit also includes the biography of each member of the Legislative LGBT Caucus. In addition to Senator Kuehl, the members of the LGBT Caucus are: Senators Christine Kehoe and Carole Migden, and Assemblymembers Jackie Goldberg, John Laird, and Mark Leno.

The California Legislative LGBT Caucus was founded in June, 2002. The caucus' role is to present a forum for the California Legislature to discuss issues that affect lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Californians and to further the goal of equality and justice for all Californians. The LGBT Caucus' formation made California the first state in the country to recognize an official caucus of openly-LGBT state legislators.

*Eric Astacaan is consultant to the LGBT Caucus.*

## SB 820: Not Your Average Water Bill

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By Dennis O'Connor

When Senator Kuehl's Committee on Natural Resources was expanded to include Water Resources, she requested a series of extensive briefings and learned something startling. "I found it surprising to learn that we know so little about how people use water, how they manage water, and what they plan to do to meet the needs of our growing population."

And so, Senator Kuehl introduced SB 820 – 33 pages of proposed changes to the law, all designed to:

- Make water conservation a fundamental duty in water policy.
- Improve the reporting of how water rights holders are using their rights.
- Make our process for water resources planning more open to those who wish to participate in the planning, as well as to those who want to know what the plan is."

The key elements of the bill are:

- Reasonable Use. Establishes water conservation as one of a number of factors to be considered in determining the reasonableness of a water use by a water rights holder or a retailer of water.
- SWP Reliability Report. Requires that the department of water resources (DWR) produce a biennial state water project (SWP) reliability report.
- Groundwater Reporting. Expands the groundwater reporting requirements and provisions currently in place for Los Angeles, Ventura, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties to the entire state.
- Surface Water Reporting. Establishes consequences for failing to file statements of annual diversion or use for any diversion or use that occurs on or after January 1, 2006.
- California Water Plan. Requires the plan to include a discussion of the amount of energy both produced by and required by each water management strategy during peak and nonpeak use.

*Water Bill continued on page 9.*



- Urban Water Management Plans. Makes more explicit the public process for preparing and adopting urban water management plans.
- Groundwater Management Plans. Requires a local agency to update the groundwater management plans on or before December 31, 2008, and every 5 years thereafter.
- Agricultural Water Management Plans. Substantially revises existing law relating to agricultural water management planning to require every agricultural water supplier to prepare and adopt an agricultural water management plan, as prescribed, on or before December 31, 2010.

SB 820 is part of a package of bills introduced by several members of the Senate, all designed to improve how we protect, conserve, and manage our water resources. Richard Katz, a state water board member, noted "The Kuehl bill includes an A-to-Z list of what needs to be debated in water."

SB 820 is supported by a broad coalition of Southern California water agencies, environmental interests, and urban water agencies statewide.

According to the Southern California Water Committee, "water is the driving force of California's economy. We believe that to assure that our state's economy remains strong and viable, we need to have adequate water supplies. The more information available to determine what our water resources are, the better we can provide for the water needs of California."

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California notes that SB 820 "will strengthen water conservation policy, increase an understanding of water use in California and enhance the integrity of water resources planning and management. SB 820 will provide valuable information to state, regional and local water purveyors to promote better planning which will enable water suppliers to provide a heightened level of reliability and certainty to existing and future customers."

According to the Planning and Conservation League, "SB 820 also advances good public policy by establishing that the process for developing an Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) will be open and transparent. In addition to being important planning docu-

ments, UWMPs provide the basis for compliance with SB 610 and SB 221 that require demonstration of reliable water prior to approval of new development. Because UWMPs provide the basis for these important decisions that affect the reliability of water supplies for entire California communities, it is essential that citizens are involved and participate in the process for developing these plans."

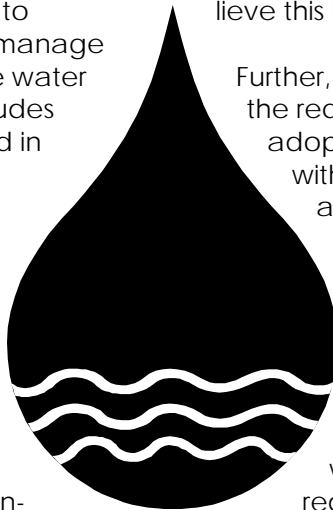
The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) notes, "Information on groundwater use in California is practically non-existent, which hinders state water planning efforts. Yet surface water and groundwater are highly interrelated. Requiring reporting of groundwater use is a long overdue step in sensible management of California's water resources. SB 820 would extend groundwater reporting provisions that have been in place in four Southern California counties since 1955. We believe this is an important reform."

Further, according to NRDC, "We further support the requirement that agricultural water suppliers adopt water management plans." "Contractors with the federal Central Valley Project are already required to prepare these plans and signatories to the Agricultural Water Management Council have already agreed to do so on a voluntary basis. SB 820 would apply this same requirement to the remaining agricultural water suppliers. Preparation of water management plans would facilitate a systematic review of water management alternatives that could reduce water use, improve water quality, and provide other environmental and economic benefits."

Support for the bill continues to grow. Attorney General Bill Lockyer has come out in support of the bill. He recently noted, "It is difficult, if not impossible, to plan realistically for water use, when it is unclear how much water is actually being put to use currently, where it is extracted or diverted, and how and where it is being used. SB 820 addresses this gap by requiring the submission of information on various forms of groundwater and surface water extraction, diversion, storage and use. This information is necessary for effective administration of water rights by the State Water Resources Control Board and land use planning by local governments."

SB 820 passed the Senate on May 31, 2005 on a 22-16 vote. The bill will next be heard in the Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee.

*Dennis O'Connor is Senior Consultant of water issues in the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee.*



# Do You Have Unclaimed Property?

You may be richer than you think! The State of California is currently in possession of more than \$4.1 billion in Unclaimed Property belonging to approximately 6.8 million individuals and organizations.

The State acquires unclaimed property through California's Unclaimed Property Law, which requires "holders" such as corporations, business associations, financial institutions, and insurance companies to annually report and deliver property to the Controller's Office after there has been no customer contact for three years. Often the owner forgets that the account exists, or moves and does not leave a forwarding address or the forwarding order expires. In some cases, the owner dies and the heirs have no knowledge of the property.

The most common types of Unclaimed Property are:

- Bank accounts and safe deposit box contents
- Stocks, mutual funds, bonds, and dividends
- Uncashed cashier's checks or money orders
- Certificates of deposit
- Matured or terminated insurance policies
- Estates
- Mineral interests and royalty payments, trust funds, and escrow accounts



California Unclaimed Property Law does NOT include real estate property.

The Unclaimed Property law was enacted to prevent holders of Unclaimed Property from using your money and taking it into their business income. This law gives the State an opportunity to return your money and provides California citizens with a single source, the State Controller's Office, to check for Unclaimed Property that may be reported by holders from around the nation.

Businesses and financial institutions (holders) are required to send a notice to your last known address, informing you that your account will be transferred to the State Controller for safekeeping if you do not notify the institution of your intent to maintain your account. If the institution is unable to contact you, or if you fail to contact the institution, your account is remitted to the State. The State Controller's Office will send a notice informing you of your Unclaimed Property, provided it is able to find a more current address by matching your reported Social Security number with the Franchise Tax Board's records. The State Controller publishes a notice in newspapers of general circulation in each county annually to inform California residents that they may have unclaimed property.

Owners or heirs may claim their property directly from the State Controller without any service charges or fees. However, if you are represented by an heir finder (also known as an investigator or asset locator), he or she may charge you a fee not to exceed 10% of the value of the property, per Section 1582 of California's Unclaimed Property Law.

To find out if you have unclaimed property, get information about how to find a claim, or learn more about California's Unclaimed Property Program, visit: <http://www.sco.ca.gov/col/ucp/index.shtml>. California residents may contact the program at (800) 992-4647. Out-of-state callers may dial: (916) 323-2827.